

“We’ve seen a tsunami smash Asian shores, Londoners bombed in their subways and our gulf states ripped apart by hurricanes. The lesson in all this is that we have to be prepared for major emergencies.”

As Governor, I’m committed to protecting our communities from dangerous sex offenders, terrorists and natural disasters, such as a tsunami or earthquake. We need a better tsunami early warning system and better emergency communications equipment, so first responders in various police, fire and rescue agencies can talk to each other.

We can also do a better job protecting citizens from criminals, locking up dangerous offenders while using proven treatments for non-violent drug offenders that are cost-effective because they reduce the need for expensive prison beds. And sometimes, it’s the little things that count – like better regulation of driver-training schools.

My Budget for Improving Public Safety Is:

STRATEGIC

Provides computerized tracking and monitoring tools to better protect citizens from offenders in and out of prison, reducing crime and the heavy social and monetary costs that go with it.

RESPONSIBLE

Purchases state-of-the-art warning systems and other tools to give citizens in our coastal communities, and areas especially vulnerable to earthquake damage, a better chance to survive a tsunami or earthquake.

ACCOUNTABLE

Confines truly dangerous criminals in Washington’s expensive prison cells while non-violent offenders whose crimes are the result of alcohol or drug addiction receive treatment. Increases regulation of driver-training schools, resulting in more safe drivers.

BY THE NUMBERS : Washington's 15 prisons and 15 work release facilities confine 16,293 inmates with an average age of 36.2 years.

Governor Gregoire's Supplemental Budget for Public Safety

Prepares for major emergencies	<p>Provides tsunami-warning system. Ten All-Hazard Alert Broadcasting radios are installed in Grays Harbor, Clallam, Jefferson, and Pacific counties. The radios will allow the state and local governments to warn people in population centers of the threat of a tsunami. <i>\$500,000 GF-State</i></p> <p>Provides emergency communications equipment so responders can talk to each other. Provides interoperable telecommunications devices for local jurisdictions. Provides assistance to local and state public safety officials to improve their readiness, cooperation and coordination. <i>\$500,000 Public Safety and Education Account</i></p> <p>Provides critical backup data systems for use in an emergency. An alternative data center is established to run backup information technology systems in the event that primary systems are incapacitated. Information systems used by the Washington State Patrol, and the departments of Transportation and Licensing, are replicated in a safe location for instant operation in the event of an emergency. <i>\$275,000 GF-State, \$1.2 million other funds</i></p> <p>Improves state ferry security. Additional funding is provided to the Washington State Patrol to replace troopers who were pulled from highway patrol assignments to screen state ferry traffic for potential terrorists. <i>\$4.7 million State Patrol Highway Account</i></p> <p>Provides security guard background checks. Background checks are provided for 5,900 existing security guards and 4,500 expected applicants in the coming year. The background checks are consistent with the Federal Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. <i>\$600,000 Business & Professions Account</i></p>
Puts more dangerous criminals behind bars	<p>Holds offenders accountable. Funding is increased to pay for rising prison population, estimated to grow by 360 inmates to 18,200 prisoners in the next year. Funding also is provided to pay for increasing number of offenders requiring community supervision, projected to rise by 2,500 offenders. <i>\$22.2 million GF-State</i></p> <p>Improves ability to track and monitor law-breakers. Provides funding to complete the Department of Corrections' outdated computerized offender-tracking information system. The new system, OMNI, provides faster and better monitoring of offenders in and out of prison. <i>\$11.3 million GF-State</i></p>
Treats nonviolent offenders for addictions	<p>Provides resources to treat drug and alcohol offenders. Community Based Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative program gets additional funding to treat nonviolent, drug- and alcohol-addicted offenders in residential settings, rather than take up expensive prison space needed for dangerous offenders. <i>\$3.5 million GF-State</i></p>
Makes roads safer	<p>Strengthens driver-training school regulation. Provides funding to better regulate and monitor more than 200 driver-training schools in Washington to make sure students are taught to drive properly. <i>\$839,000 Highway Safety Fund</i></p>
Pays forest fire bills	<p>Covers wildfire mobilization costs. Additional funds are provided to pay the costs of fighting wildfires, fire mobilization and response. <i>\$4.7 million GF-State, \$7.1 million other funds</i></p>